



**REPORT TO: WEALTHIER and FAIRER STRATEGIC GROUP
ON 13 NOVEMBER 2008**

**SUBJECT: HITRANS ANNUAL REPORT 2007/2008 AND THE HITRANS
STRATEGY DELIVERY PLAN**

BY: HEAD OF DIRECT SERVICES

1. REASON FOR REPORT

1.1 The Theme Group is asked to note the Annual Report 2007/2008 for HITRANS the Regional Transport Partnership, and the HITRANS future Delivery Plan.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 **It is recommended that the Theme Group notes the HITRANS Annual Report for 2007/2008 and the HITRANS Strategy Delivery Plan**

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The 2007/2008 Annual Report for HITRANS was approved by the HITRANS Board on 5 September 2008. It outlines the work of the Regional Transport Partnership in the 5 Council areas of the Western Isles, Argyle and Bute, Highland, Orkney and Moray during the financial year 2007/2008. Details were presented to the Council's Economic Development & Infrastructure Committee on 14 October 2008. The Report was noted and the Delivery plan was approved.

3.2 The HITRANS report covers the period when Government policy in relation to the delivery of transport projects and services changed significantly from an emphasis on regional delivery to a more local focus. This resulted in the previously anticipated levels of funding at regional level not being made available, and therefore the delivery plans in Transport Strategies for each of the Regional Partnerships had to be reviewed. In the case of HITRANS the revised Transport Strategy was approved by Scottish Ministers in July 2008.

3.3 In parallel with this the Government's national transport commitments to 2011/2012 are fully detailed, and the Strategic Transport Review (STPR) when complete will identify priorities for national transport investment thereafter in the period 2012/2022.

- 3.4 The Proposed Delivery Plan and Associated Documentation outlines a programme of initiatives which the Regional Transport Strategy hopes to deliver over the period of 2008-2022 (Section 2) and it sets out the Horizontal Sub-Strategies in further detail (Section 3). Horizontal themes are strategies, initiatives or interventions across the region as a whole. It also describes the nature of the Strategic and Regional Network links within the HITRANS area (Section 4), and provides details of the documents that support the Strategy and Delivery Plan.
- 3.5 The timescales are sub-divided into Short Term (2008-2012), Medium Term (2013-2017) and Long Term (2018-2022). The Plan is a “living document” and will be subject to regular review and change, particularly in the light of changing priorities and Local Transport Strategies in the constituent Local Authorities..
- 3.6 The Draft Delivery Plan is intended to reflect what the 5 Councils which form HITRANS have as their potential investment plans over the next 3 years, aimed at delivering local improvements as part of their Single Outcome Agreements within their available budgets, and also their aspirations post 2011 which are subject to funding availability within future spending review periods.
- 3.7 Interventions where Government has indicated a commitment within current spending programmes have been included, as have those which HITRANS would wish included in future local and nationally funded programmes from 2012 to deliver the outcomes and objectives of the Transport Strategy for the Highlands and Islands. Those which affect Moray most are Fochabers Bypass (pre-2012), Elgin and Keith A96 Bypasses, A95 road improvements and selective dualling of parts of the A9. The latter obviously represent the aspirations of the partners and do not indicate any commitment on the part of the Government at this stage.
- 3.8 At a local level there is less overlap between this Council’s spending priorities and those improvement schemes identified as being of regional significance in the Hitrans Strategy. The only improvement scheme in the Strategy for which the Council has identified funding in the Short Term (2008-2012) is the A939 between Tomintoul and the A95. Only preliminary budgetary estimates over the 4 year period of likely spending are provided at this stage and the costs are not a firm commitment.
- 3.9 The programme also indicates that the Moray Council intends to investigate, with Transport Scotland, possible means of improving traffic conditions on the A96 within Elgin, and that the Council also intends to carry out unspecified local internal improvements to the road network within Elgin in the period 2008-2012.

- 3.10 It is proposed to investigate possible future road improvements on the A941 Dufftown to Craigellachie to eliminate pinch points and assist safer overtaking during the Short Term (2008-2012), but no funding is allocated within this period, and works have been notionally programmed for Medium Term 2013-2017 at the earliest and subject to available funding.
- 3.11 A list of schemes which have been suggested by constituent Councils in later consultations will be assessed within the first 3 years of the Strategy. In the case of Moray these include the A98 Route Action Plan, the A941 Elgin to Craigellachie Route Action Plan and Elgin Traffic Management, although the argument for the latter to be recognised as a regional issue rather than one internal to Elgin is still to be accepted by HITRANS.
- 3.12 HITRANS is seeking to have the Strategy Delivery Plan ratified by all 5 constituent Councils.

4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Corporate Development Plan/Community Plan/Service Improvement Plan

The report encompasses the main aims of the Council's Economic Development programme by maintaining suitable transport facilities and infrastructure for residents, visitors, businesses and workers.

(b) Policy and Legal

The report refers to the Council's role as a partner in a Regional Transport Partnership in accord with the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005

(c) Resources (Financial, Risks, Staffing and Property)

The Delivery Plan refers to the expenditure likely to be spent by the Council in the years 2008-2012 on schemes already approved in the Council's Revenue or Capital Budgets. There is no financial commitment to HITRANS.

Investigation of schemes will only take place as staffing levels permit. There are no individual risks identified nor further implications for staffing or property.

(d) Consultations

The Moray Council Convener and Councillor Leadbitter as HITRANS Board Members were consulted on the report presented to the Economic Development & Infrastructure Committee.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The Group is asked to note the HITRANS Annual Report 2007/2008 and the HITRANS Strategy Delivery Plan.**

Alexander Ritchie
Head of Direct Services